



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: October 5, 2005

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a project agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to use Proposition A, Big Five Excess Funds to improve the Bell Creek Riverfront Natural Park, City of Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a Project Agreement with the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District to use up to \$50,000 of Proposition A Big Five Excess Funds to create and improve the Bell Creek Riverfront Natural Park.

Background: Working in the City of Los Angeles project review process, staff was able to persuade the applicant of Tentative Tract No. 060222 to donate two lots from a proposed 21-unit project to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). The subject 16,000-square-foot-lot that must be transferred to the MRCA as a condition of map recordation is located on the southern side of Bell Creek channel just west of its confluence with Chatsworth Creek. This location is just south of Sherman Way and just west of Shoup Avenue. The site is located within the upper Los Angeles River Watershed. Few if any other riverfront natural parks exist in the west San Fernando Valley except for the many areas downstream within the Sepulveda Basin complex. The attached aerial photo shows the project location.

The three-acre open lot, of which the 15,000-square-foot-lot is a part of, contains minimal native vegetation but supports a broad range of native mammals and bird species. Migrating Canadian geese visit the site annually to feed. The future park site abuts the broad flood control right-of-way of Bell Creek. At present a fence must divide the two public parcels. Over the course of time, staff hopes that the fence will be breached and the subject 16,000-square-foot-lot will become a stopover on the future Bell Creek Trail on the Los Angeles County Flood Control Right-of-way.

The Governing Board has authorized staff to apply for a Proposition 50 Chapter 5 River Parkway grant to improve the park for habitat and recreation purposes. As part of this process, the MRCA has submitted an application requesting \$50,000 in Proposition 50 funding from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to combine

with other sources to create a natural park. However, the grant program requires a non-state matching source. Big Five Excess funds are the only non-state source available to the MRCA to provide such match. The more matching funds that an applicant can add to a Chapter 5 grant application, the higher the project will rank.

The park design would maximize the habitat value of the site and provide a loop trail and observation area. Excellent public parking and access is available on and from adjacent neighborhood streets. The applicant of the tract has graciously agreed to provide a water meter at the park entrance and to construct an attractive fence to close the park during night hours. This natural park will serve the local neighborhood, local schools and community centers that are a few minutes walk from the site.

Supervisory District Three Big Five Excess Funds can only be spent in District Three. Expenditure of the subject sub-account of excess funds requires consensus between the MRCA and the subject Supervisor and subsequently Board of Supervisors approval. The use of these funds has not been approved yet by the Third District Supervisor.